

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b). Yes Sir. the brief details of the Scheme are given in the enclosed statement.

STATEMENT

Reserve Bank has decided to selectively permit exporters having satisfactory track record to maintain foreign currency accounts with banks in India. Initially such accounts will be permitted to be maintained with SBI, other public sector banks and foreign banks operating in India at designated branches which have adequate infrastructure and expertise. Reserve Bank will also be prepared to consider requests from exporters who are in a position to arrange to raise foreign currency overdrafts/revolving lines of credit from banks abroad for financing their import requirements for maintaining foreign currency accounts with banks abroad. RBI will also consider requests from banks in private sector authorised to deal in foreign exchange for maintenance of foreign currency accounts of their exporter customers on merits.

2. The facility of maintaining foreign currency accounts either in India or abroad, as the case may be, will generally be extended to export houses, trading houses, star trading houses and other exporters whose net foreign exchange earning during the preceding year from exports to and imports from countries in External Group are not less than Rs. 4 crores. When an exporter is allowed to open a foreign currency account with either a bank in India or abroad, he will be permitted to credit proceeds of all export shipments made by him to countries in External Group (except countries which are members of the Asian Clearing Union) to such accounts. The funds in the accounts will be permitted to be utilised for payments of imports from Countries in external Group (exceptions countries of the Asian Clear-

ing Union), repayment of foreign currency loans raised by the exporter concerned with the approval of the Reserve Bank and payment of interest on such loans, as also for the purposes covered by the blanket permits issued by the Reserve Bank.

3. The facility of maintaining foreign currency accounts is being introduced as a mechanism for settlement of payment for imports, repayment of foreign currency loans and expenditure to be incurred for certain purposes approved by the Reserve Bank, out of export proceeds credited to such accounts, the exporters will have to comply with all the Exchange Control/Trade Control requirements in respect of exports/imports and foreign currency borrowings, etc

Rationalisation of Sales Tax, Octroi and Royalty on Essential Commodities

2673. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have asked State Governments to monitor prices and also to review and rationalise levies such as sales tax, octroi and royalty on essential commodities; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b). During the meeting of the Chief Ministers held on October 4-5, 1991 a background note on management of inflation was circulated which, inter alia, requested the state governments to monitor prices at the state level and to examine the impact various levies such as sales tax, entry fee, exit fee, royalty, octroi, cess, etc. on prices and to rationalise them in the sphere of essential commodities, such as sugar, tea and edible oils. The state governments were also requested not to impose

any informal restrictions on movements of essential commodities as they not only lead to rise in prices and blackmoney but also create a psychology of scarcity. It was emphasised upon the state governments that the national economy is an organic entity, and coordinated action by both the Centre and State Governments is necessary in areas of agreed priorities.

AC-Band Satellite Uplink Earth Station

2674. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bharat Electronics Limited has successfully developed and manufactured AC-Band Stellite uplink Earth Station;

(b) if so, the purpose for which this Earth Station is likely to be used;

(c) the cost of this uplink earth Station and its difference with the uplink Earth Station which was being imported earlier; and

(d) the details of the other items being manufactured and developed by the Bharat Electronics Limited?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Uplink (C-Band) is used for telecasting both national and regional network programme through statellite.

(c) Bharat electronics' (BE) price of this uplink station is rs. 2,39 crores. the landed cost of a similar imported system would be around Rs. 3 crores.

(d) BE manufactures a large number of communication systems, radars broadcast-

ing equipments and electronic components amounting to a turnover of over Rs. 700 crores per annum. The items idigenously developed by BE include Basic Earth Station sub-systems like Upconverters, Down Converters, Low Noise Amplifiers, Video Modulators, Demodulators, Video & Audio Processing/Control Circuits, Steptrack systems, Online Monitoring Sub-systems etc.

Allocation of Funds to Orissa for Construction of Bridges

2675. SHRI GOPI NATH GAJAPATHI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the amount allocated for implementing Road Development Programmes in Orissa under the Central Road Fund Scheme;

(b) whether the amount allocated to Orissa for the construction of bridges is not adequate to meet the requirements of the State; and

(c) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the government to enhance the allocation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c). The funds under Central Road fund are released taking into account the total cost of Schemes approved in the State, total funds already released, requirement projected by State Government and availability of budget provision. Funds into the aggregate amount of Schemes sanctioned including bridges in Orissa have already been released. No release during 1991-92 is possible until technical sanction by the State government for one newly approved bridge work costing Rs.38.00 lakhs, is accorded.